

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. 87A-42

### 1. Name of Property

(indicate preferred name)

historic

other

Shirley B and Russell G Watson Tobacco Barn No. 1

### 2. Location

street and number 17801 Croom Road

not for publication

city, town Brandywine

vicinity

county Prince George's

### 3. Owner of Property

(give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Shirley B. & Russell G. Watson

street and number 15800 Croom Road

telephone

city, town Brandywine

state MD

zip code 20613-7319

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

liber 9920 folio 686

city, town

tax map 174D1 tax parcel 70

tax ID number

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Number of Contributing Resources  
previously listed in the Inventory

## 7. Description

Inventory No. 87A-42

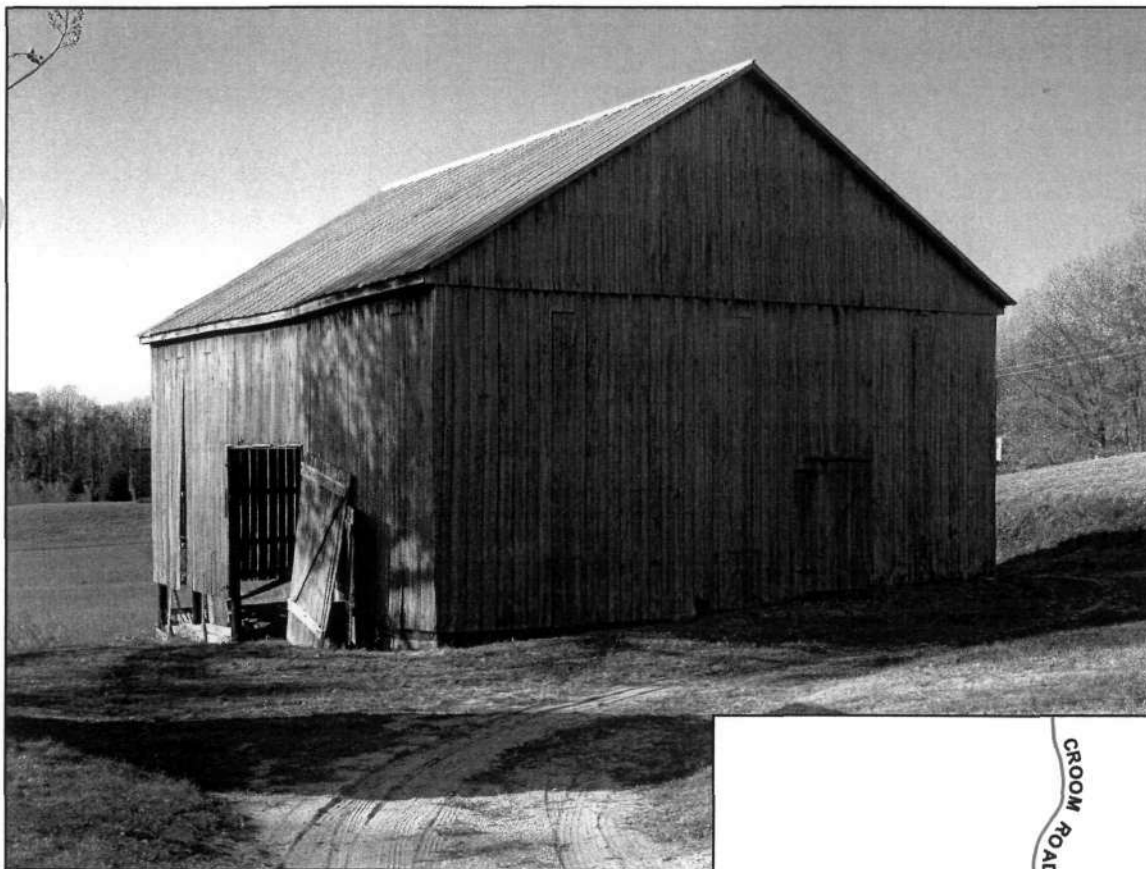
### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Built between 1900 and 1945, this tobacco barn is located to the west of Croom Road off a narrow dirt access road. Another tobacco barn is positioned to the north of this one. Sited on a grassy hill in the middle of the field, this wood frame barn has a concrete block pier foundation which replaced an earlier wood post foundation. The barn is clad in circular sawn vertical boards and the gable roof is covered with sheets of standing-seam metal. Sections of vertical boards on all elevations are hinged at the top to open outward as air doors. Double-leaf vertical board doors are centrally positioned in the north and south elevations, allowing access of farm machinery to the barn. Single-leaf wood vertical board doors exist in the east and west elevations.

Access to the interior of the barn was not granted. Tobacco is not currently cultivated on the land surrounding this barn.



## 8. Significance

Inventory No. 87A-42

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	

Specific dates 1900 - 1945

Architect/Builder Unknown

Construction dates 1900 - 1945

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☐ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

During the more than two centuries in which tobacco served as the money crop in Prince George's County, planters, indentured servants, slaves, and farmers developed utilitarian structures for tobacco curing and packing that have remained essentially the same to the present day. Early barns were square in plan and constructed of notched logs with open spaces between the logs to permit the circulation of air (a log dwelling had chinking and caulking between the logs to prevent the infiltration of air). Inside, scaffolding held the tobacco sticks with the leaves suspended from them in such a way as to allow air to flow over the drying tobacco to prevent mold. Farmers employing the fire-curing method lit small fires on the barn's earthen floor to lower the relative humidity (Percy 1979:33). The Prince George's County barns differed from those constructed in Virginia and North Carolina for the flue curing of bright-leaf tobacco, which employed a stove or firebox with a flue and require a different type of barn—one that was essentially airtight to hold the heat. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the increasing availability of sawn lumber enabled southern Maryland's farmers to construct timber-frame tobacco barns covered with wooden siding, usually vertical board siding. Southern Maryland's air cured tobacco utilized barns constructed with air doors along the sides that could be opened to facilitate the circulation of air. These air doors were three or four vertical boards fastened together and usually hinged that could be opened.

The earliest tobacco barns identified in the survey along Croom Road are the ca. 1820 Duvall Tobacco Barn (87A-31) and the 1800-1830 Watson Tobacco Barn (87A-55) and the most recent barns date to the middle of the twentieth century such as the Stielper (87A-48), Jackson (87A-47), and Chase (87A-44) tobacco barns. Although the dates of construction for the surveyed barns range over one hundred and thirty years, the construction materials, methods of construction, and form of the tobacco barn changed very little. All of the barns surveyed are wood-frame and clad in vertical boards; all of the barns contain four-foot by four-foot rooms to hang the tobacco; and all of the barns have hinged vertical board air doors to control the circulation of air within the barns. The changes in form are very minor but provide the most insight into the date of construction. Early nineteenth century barns have steeply pitched gable roofs. From about 1830 until 1900 the barns have more standardized gable roofs, sometimes with one side of the gable extended to create a shed roof over a stripping room. Around 1900, the use of tractors increased in Prince George's County and central double-leaf doors opening onto a wide central passage began to appear in the barn. The final form change was the advent of the gambrel roof, which created more space within the barn to hang tobacco. Gambrel roofs begin to appear in the 1930s and 1940s.

This tobacco barn is significant as an example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century tobacco barn in Prince George's county, Maryland and fits into the third period of tobacco barn construction. It is also significant for having air doors hinged at the top which open outward, instead of the more common side hinged boards. The form of the barn and the presence of the doorways large enough for farm equipment to enter the barn, provide the 1900 – 1945 date range for the construction of this barn.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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David O. Percy, *The Production of Tobacco Along the Colonial Potomac. The National Colonial Farm Research Report No. 1, Agricultural History Series* (Accokeek, Md.: The Accokeek Foundation, 1979), 10-11.]

National Register of Historic Places, Red Fox Farm, Mecklenburg Co., Va., File 58-131, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va.

Calvert County Historic District Commission, "Tobacco Barns Calvert County Maryland," Prince Frederick, Md: Calvert County Historic District Commission, 1991), brochure.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 43.0871

Acreage of historical setting

Quadrangle name  Quadrangle scale: Lower Marlboro

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

## 11. Form Prepared by

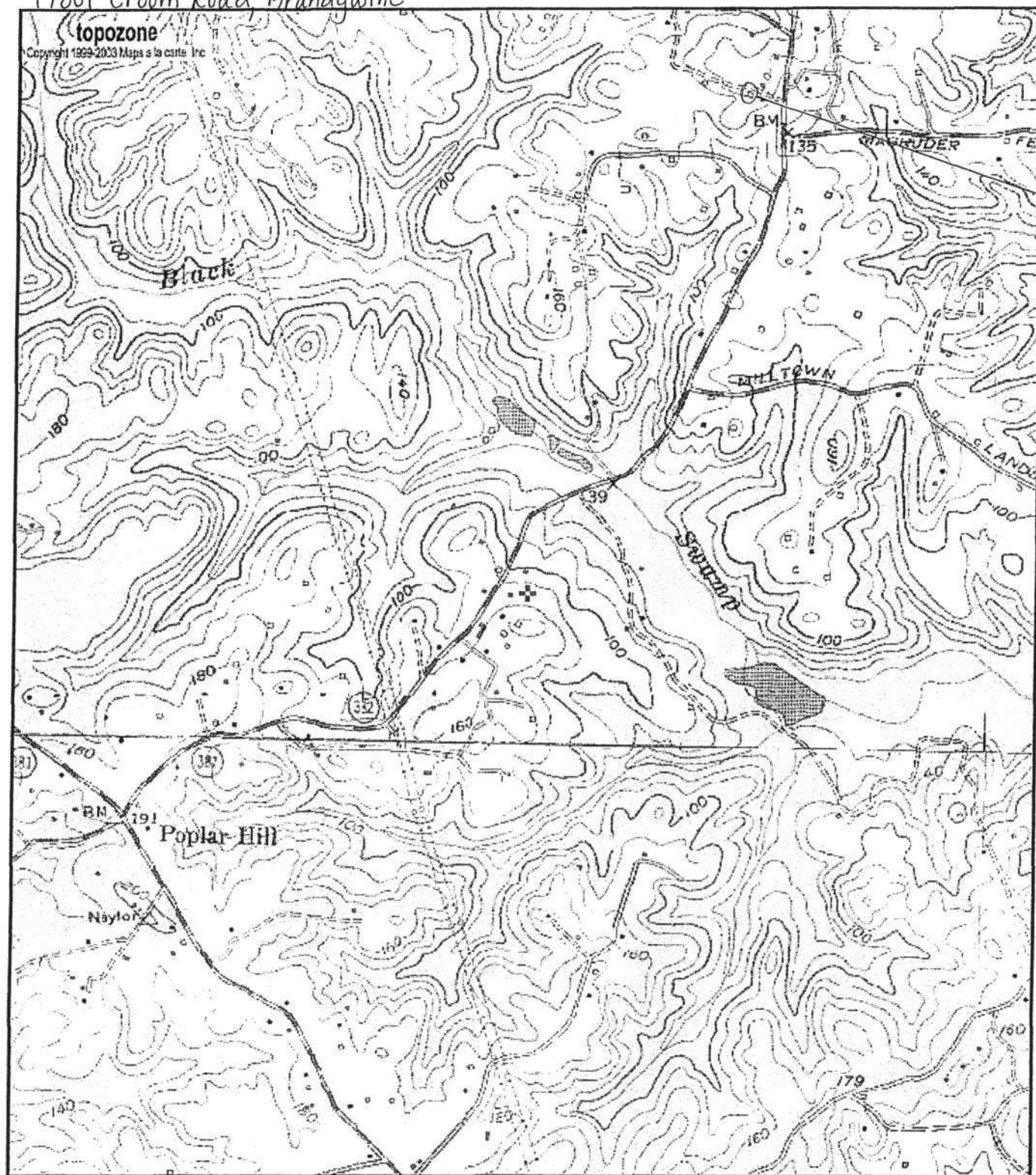
name/title	J. Shafagoj, Architectural Historian		
organization	Ashley Neville, LLC	date	March 1, 2006
street & number	11311 Cedar Lane	telephone	804.798.2124
city or town	Glen Allen	state	VA

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

Shirley B and Russell G Watson Tobacco Barn No. 1  
17801 Croom Road, Brandywine



PG: 87A-42

UTM 18 349788E 4277087N (NAD83/WGS84)  
**USGS Lower Marlboro (MD) Quadrangle**  
Projection is UTM Zone 18 NAD83 Datum

M=-10.97  
G=-1.078